

ABC COVID-19 Protocols for College Fall 2023

As we continue the Fall 2023 semester, the College has moved to a COVID-19 endemic approach. As an endemic virus, COVID-19 is expected to follow a regularly occurring pattern with transmission spikes in the colder months of fall and winter. Endemic viruses, though predictable, can cause a range of symptoms from mild to severe, hospitalization and even mortality. It is important to know your level of risk and take personal protection and precautions against severe disease.

Vaccine and Booster Policy

All students are strongly encouraged to stay up to date on their initial course of vaccinations and boosters consistent with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations. While vaccines are not required at this time as a condition of enrollment, ABC reserves the authority to change this policy at any time because of changes in local conditions or due to requirements imposed by Federal, State or local authorities.

Mask and Social Distancing

Campus will continue to monitor local conditions and determine if mask mandates are required. Such assessment should include an evaluation of CDC guidance and any metrics that exist at that time. ABC may continue to maintain a mask requirement in any venue or with any specific population on campus in the college's sole discretion. COVID-19 Symptoms.

We encourage all members of the college community to be cognizant of COVID-19 symptoms. Symptoms of COVID-19 can vary depending upon the current circulating variant and some people may have no symptoms. Everyone should familiarize themselves with COVID-19 symptoms which can be found on the CDC website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>.

COVID-19 Testing and When to Test

If you develop symptoms of COVID, get tested as soon as possible. Most often, COVID-19 presents upper and/or lower respiratory symptoms. For those who develop a fever, it is often difficult to distinguish between COVID-19 and seasonal influenza. Testing can determine which is the causative virus and the best treatment approach.

During this endemic phase, most people now have a history of repeated COVID infections and/or a history of vaccinations. It may take up to 3 days for a symptomatic person to test positive due to a certain amount of "viral load" needed to test positive with rapid antigen testing. Do not assume you are COVID-free if you test negative on the first day of symptoms. Remember to test again in the next few days.

Rapid antigen testing is available at the on-campus Health Center. Antigen tests are also widely available for purchase at local pharmacies.

If you Have a Direct Exposure to a COVID-19 Positive Person

If you are a direct contact of a COVID-positive case, test yourself 3-5 days post exposure or earlier if you develop symptoms. Testing earlier than days 3-5 may produce a premature negative test result. You do not have to quarantine if exposed, but you should test yourself during the recommended time frame.

COVID-19 Protocols for the College Community

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, The Division of Student Affairs at Arkansas Baptist College has developed a comprehensive plan to prioritize the health, safety, and well-being of our students while maintaining a conducive living and learning environment. These protocols have been meticulously designed to align with local health guidelines and best practices. Here's an overview of our COVID-19 plans:

Testing Protocol: We want to assure you that in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case within a room or a specific area, we will promptly implement our testing protocol. This means that we will request all students within the affected area to undergo testing. This proactive measure is aimed at ensuring the well-being of our entire campus community and preventing potential spread.

Enhanced Cleaning and Sanitization: Common areas, high-touch surfaces, and shared spaces within residential buildings will undergo frequent and rigorous cleaning and sanitization procedures. Hand sanitization stations and masks will be readily available throughout residential areas.

Physical Distancing: Layouts will be adapted to promote physical distancing. Common areas, lounges, and study spaces will be rearranged to ensure safe distances between residents.

Quarantine and Isolation Spaces: Designated spaces have been allocated in Hill Hall to accommodate students who live on campus who need to quarantine or isolate due to potential exposure or infection. These spaces will have necessary amenities and support services.

Meals and Dining Services: Residential Life will collaborate with the Bistro to ensure that to-go meals are prepared for the residents. These meals will be delivered directly to the students in the residence halls, minimizing unnecessary contact and ensuring a safe dining experience.

Academic Support: The Division of Student Affairs will work closely with Academic Affairs to ensure that professors are informed if a student is in quarantine. If a course is able to be attended online and the student is well enough to participate, they will access the course remotely. If the course cannot be moved online, the student will be allowed to make up the missed work within a reasonable timeframe determined by Academic Affairs and the professor.

Technology Accessibility: Recognizing that not all students may have access to computers, the institution will provide temporary laptops to students in need, allowing them to complete their assignments without interruption.

Health Monitoring and Reporting: Residents will be required to report their health status and symptoms regularly. Any signs of illness will prompt swift action, including testing and appropriate isolation measures.

Guest and Visitor Restrictions: To minimize the risk of exposure, strict limitations on guests and visitors will be implemented.

Health and Safety Education: Residents will receive ongoing education about COVID-19 preventive measures, symptoms, and actions to take in case of illness.

COVID-19 Protocol for Campus Gatherings and Events

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 endemic, our institution places a strong emphasis on the safety and well-being of our community members. Large gatherings, while essential for our sense of community, carry the potential for increased virus transmission. Therefore, we have implemented stringent COVID-19 protocols to ensure that these events can take place with the utmost precaution and care.

Our guidelines include mandatory mask-wearing, physical distancing, limited capacities, and enhanced sanitization measures. These measures are not intended to stifle the spirit of togetherness but rather to foster a secure environment where we can celebrate, learn, and grow responsibly while minimizing the risk of infection.

COVID-19 Protocol for Campus Transportation (Buses)

Ensuring the safety of all passengers and staff is our top priority when it comes to campus transportation during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We have implemented the following protocols to minimize the risk of transmission:

Mandatory Face Coverings: All passengers and staff on campus buses are required to wear face masks at all times while onboard. Masks must cover the nose and mouth fully, and they should be worn correctly.

Reduced Seating Capacity: To allow for physical distancing, seating capacity on campus buses will be reduced. Please adhere to designated seating areas and maintain distance from others. Seats marked as unavailable must remain vacant.

Enhanced Cleaning and Sanitization: Buses will undergo regular and thorough cleaning and disinfection procedures. High-touch surfaces like handrails and seats will be sanitized frequently. Hand sanitization stations will be provided at bus entrances, and passengers are encouraged to use them before boarding.

Ventilation: Buses will maintain adequate ventilation by keeping windows partially open, weather permitting. Proper ventilation is essential in reducing the risk of virus transmission.

Boarding and Offboarding Procedures: Passengers should board and offboard the bus in an orderly manner, maintaining distance from others whenever possible. Avoid congregating in the aisles and near the bus entrance or exit.

Symptom Monitoring: If a student or staff member is feeling unwell, experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or have been in close contact with a confirmed case, please do not use campus transportation until you are cleared by healthcare professionals.

Compliance and Communication: All passengers are expected to adhere to these protocols. Bus drivers and transportation staff are authorized to enforce these guidelines. Clear signage onboard will provide reminders about safety measures.

Flexibility and Adaptability: These protocols are subject to change in response to evolving public health guidelines and conditions. Updates will be communicated promptly to the campus community.

Communication Protocols: Transparent and timely communication channels will be established to keep residents informed about any developments or changes related to COVID-19.

Reporting a Positive COVID-19 Test Result to Student Affairs

If a student tests positive for COVID-19, students must take these steps to inform Student Affairs promptly:

Isolate: Isolate immediately to prevent potential transmission to others. Follow local health guidelines for the duration of your isolation period.

Notify Student Affairs: Email Student Affairs with your full name, contact information, and the date of your positive test result. You must also provide proof of the positive test result from a healthcare provider. Be prepared to share details about your recent activities on campus, close contacts, and any classes or events you attended while potentially infectious. This information will aid in contact tracing efforts.

Follow Isolation Guidelines: Adhere to isolation guidelines and only return to campus when you meet the criteria for ending isolation.

Privacy and Confidentiality: Rest assured that your privacy will be respected, and your information will be handled confidentially.

Protocols for Faculty and Staff to Report COVID-19 Cases to Immediate Supervisor and HR

In the event of a COVID-19 diagnosis, faculty and staff are expected to follow these protocols to ensure the safety and well-being of the campus community:

Immediate Isolation: If you test positive for COVID-19 or experience symptoms, immediately isolate yourself to prevent potential transmission to others.

Notify Immediate Supervisor: Inform your immediate supervisor as soon as possible about your COVID-19 status. Share your diagnosis or symptoms, along with an estimated period of absence from work.

Provide Proof: Provide documentation of your positive COVID-19 test result from a healthcare provider. This is essential for verification purposes.

Contact HR: Simultaneously, contact the HR department to report your diagnosis or symptoms. Share the same information you provided to your supervisor.

Contact Tracing: Cooperate with any contact tracing efforts initiated by the college or local health authorities. Provide information about your recent contacts and activities on campus.

Privacy and Confidentiality: Rest assured that your privacy and personal health information will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Only those who need to know will be informed of your situation.

Follow Health Guidelines: Adhere to the guidance provided by your healthcare provider and local health authorities regarding isolation, treatment, and when it is safe to return to work.

Stay Informed: Stay updated on the latest campus and public health information. Regularly check your email and official communication channels for any important updates.

We are committed to maintaining a safe and inclusive community during these unprecedented times. Our COVID-19 campus plans reflect our dedication to the health of our students, faculty, and staff, and the continued pursuit of academic excellence.